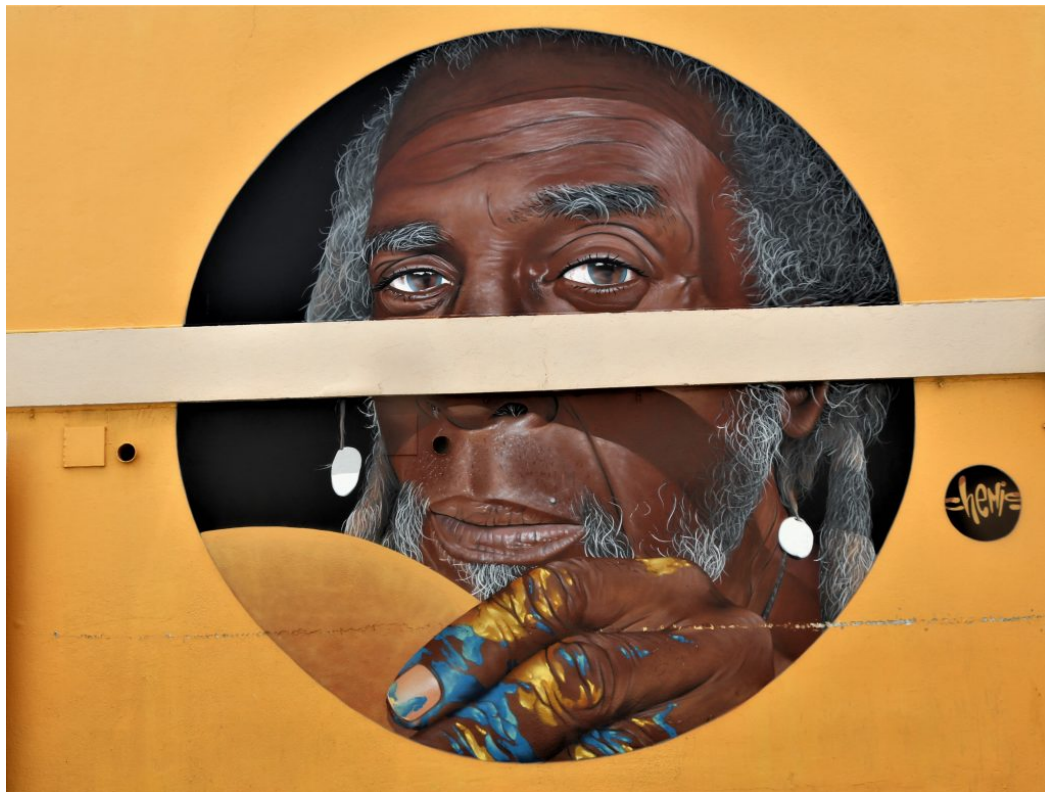


Divine as usual

Life and work of Mo Mohamed as told to Luc Alofs



Tribute to Mo Mohamed. Series of Murals in San Nicolaas Aruba, 2017. Made by Aruba Art Fair.

In 2021, the autobiography of well-known Dutch Caribbean artist Mo Mohamed saw the light of day.
Godelijk zoals gewoonlijk, leven en werk van Mo Mohamed zoals verteld aan Luc Alofs.

Mo was born on December 26, 1944 in San Nicolas, Aruba to Surinamese parents. In his autobiography Mo Mohamed (1944) tells in his own Caribbean Dutch words about his artistry and his life on the side of society in Aruba, the Netherlands, Curaçao, Suriname and Brazil. Mo describes the hyper-diversity in San Nicolas and the neighborhood Rancho in the Aruba of the Lago days in the 1950s and the cultural, artistic, sexual and democratic revolutions in the Netherlands of the 1960s. In the 1970s, racism and police brutality appears to be the order of the day in Amsterdam, Aruba, Curaçao, Surinam, Venezuela and Brazil. Police brutality in Curaçao in the 1970s causes life-long back problems. The 1980s are set in artistic circles in the grim Suriname after the 1982 December murders and during the internal war between Bouterse and Brunswijk (1986-1992). Here he directed the youth group *Danspassie Collectief* and music collective *Sonfaya 2020* and also worked for the National Ballet. Between 1990 and 2018 Mo lived and worked in Aruba where he performed with his sons in musical collective *Sonfaya 2020* and with the youth group *Hala!, Hubentud Arubano Apoyando Literatura Arubano*. Mo exhibited in Amsterdam, Curaçao, Surinam, Brazil, Guyana, Paris and of course Aruba.



Mo Mohamed and Loc Alofs

Mo elaborates on his outlook on life and the arts. Mo portrays well-known, unknown and now forgotten artists. There is always the distinction between the self-proclaimed artistic elite and the cultural worker that Mo is. Personalism, petty bourgeoisie and racism put a brake on collective artistic flourishing on the small-scale islands and in Suriname. Mo looks back on the extensive use of marihuana and heroin and the role of indigenous religion, spirituality and nature in his life. Mo shares the meaning of his to many familiar greeting with the reader. How are you doing, con ta bai, Mo? *Divine as usual, Divino manera siempre, Goddelijk zoals gewoonlijk.*

Writing Mo's biography was an adventure. The book is based on approximately fifty hours of interviews in 2017 at Mo's home in Seroe Bentana, Aruba and countless hours of additional conversations. The interviews took place in Dutch, say ninety percent, and further in Papiamentu, Caribbean English, Sranan, Spanish, Portuguese and German. The sound recordings were transcribed, then edited into many hundreds of text fragments. These formed the basis of the final text in which the spoken language – or better: languages – was preserved as much as possible. To the authors, the book is a success if the reader hears Mo and not reads Luc.

The book has 200 pages of which 24 are color pages with Mo's artistic work. Mo's story reads like a jazz biography, a cultural or arts study, and a Caribbean diaspora novel. *Divine as usual* is a contemporary Nansi story.



Mo Mohamed - 2018

Listen to Luc. Describes the production of this publication



04:29 🔊

Luc Alofs (1960) is a cultural anthropologist and historian working at the University of Aruba. He was among other things curator of *Fundacion Museo Arubano* and *Fundacion Herencia de Slavitud Aruba*. His books include *Ken ta Arubiano?*, *Sociale integratie en natievorming op Aruba* (Luc Alofs & Leontine Merckies, 1990, 2001), *Slaven zonder Plantage (kinder-)slavernij en emancipatie op Aruba* (1996, 2013), *Onderhorigheid en Separatisme, koloniaal bestuur en lokale politiek op Aruba, 1816-1955* (2011, 2013) en *Koloniale Mythen en Benedenwindse Feiten* (2018).

Goddelijk zoals gewoonlijk, werk en leven van Mo Mohammed zoals verteld aan Luc Alofs was published by LM Publishers, Edam, the Netherlands and Charuba, Aruba in 2021 with co-funding from the interuniversity research project Traveling Caribbean Heritage and the University of Aruba. For comments and information, please contact: lucalofs@gmail.com.



Divine as usual, life and work of Mo Mohamed as told to Luc Alofs

Material Source by Luc Alofs and EL PRAN Projecten.



CONOCEMI S01 E02 MO' MOHAMED

from [Aruba Art Fair](#)

03:27 |

Meet Mo Mohamed. Docu-Series by Aruba Art Fair.

